

Early Stuart Catholicism: Revisions and Re-Revisions*

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Subjects that inspire polemicists, give rise to lasting political myths, and lead regularly to riot in the streets seldom fail to attract the attention of professional historians. Until recently, however, this was the case with post-Reformation English Catholicism.¹ Since 1904 the Catholic Record Society has published primary sources upon which a reassessment of Catholic history might be based, but only in the 1950s did hagiographical and polemical influences cease to dominate the secondary literature. They gave way before a series of studies of lay Catholics on the county level which firmly embedded the recusant in his local context, putting to rest the image of the English Catholics as an alien body about which English historians were "not required to bother."² In recent years scarcely a county

* I owe thanks to Walter Arnstein, Ann Franklin, Jill Lewis, David Lunn, and Paul Schroeder for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article. Abbreviations used in the footnotes are as follow: *CHR*, *Catholic Historical Review*; *CR*, *Clergy Review*; *CRS*, *Catholic Record Society*; *DR*, *Downside Review*; *HJ*, *Historical Journal*; *HS*, *Historical Studies (Conference of Irish Historians)*; *JEH*, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*; *PP*, *Past and Present*; *RH*, *Recusant History*; and *SCH*, *Studies in Church History*.

¹ This is usually called "recusancy," referring to the period between Reformation and Emancipation. "Recusants" were those who refused (Latin, *recusare*) to attend Anglican services. For brevity's sake I have adopted this convention, save where I am specifically arguing that "recusancy" and "post-Reformation English Catholicism" are not identical. Typical of the obscurity of the field is the fact that the *Oxford Bibliography of English History: Stuart Period* (Davies and Keeler, eds., 2d ed. [London, 1970]) mentions the existence of the main journal in the field, *Recusant History*, but cites not one of its articles. The most complete reference source for recent work is *Bibliography of the Reformation, 1450–1648, relating to the United Kingdom and Ireland for . . . 1955–70* (Derek Baker, ed. [Oxford, 1975]).

² See Alan Davidson, "Sources for Church History: 4. Recusant History, A Bibliographical Article," *Local Historian* 9 (1971): 283–86; and Francis Edwards, "A Decade of Recusant History," *CR*, n.s. 57 (1972): 510–23. The editors of *Recusant History* reviewed developments in the field in the January 1961 and April 1976 issues of *RH*. The task of source publication has been slowed by the wide dispersal of material in continental archives and by severe financial constraints. Many indications of value for English Catholic history may be found in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, F. J. Byrne, eds., *Early Modern Ireland, 1534–1691* (Oxford, 1976), esp. bibliography, pp. 634–95. For the influences that distorted European Catholic historiography generally before Vatican II, see Eric Cochrane, "New Light on Post-Tridentine Italy: A Note on Recent Counter-Reformation Scholarship," *CHR* 56 (1970): 291–319; and

history has lacked its section on the local Catholics, and several have taken the religious evolution of their counties as their central focus.³

While these works have increased our stock of information about the Catholic population, they have not provided a new interpretative framework. This may be, in part, because the application of the county framework to the study of English Catholicism is an archivally convenient device not really suited, as I hope to show, to its subject matter. Although there were more Catholic gentry in local office than is usually realized,⁴ they were unlikely to find in the seasonal occasions of county solidarity—assizes, quarter sessions, militia musters—any confirmation of their group identity as Catholics. In their religious life as Catholics, these gentry were detached from the county and parish communities. When, in the seventeenth century, their priests began to abandon a peripatetic life which disregarded county and parish boundaries, they became domesticated (with ambiguous consequences for their spiritual authority) in aristocratic homes. These were frequently at the edge of the county, where the priests and their protectors could be ready for a quick flight “over the border.”⁵ The desire of the Catholic aristocracy to marry coreligionists also directed them, in many cases, away from the county.⁶ The resulting set of family alliances—the

“What Is Catholic Historiography?” *CHR* 61 (1975): 169–90. For the manner in which these influenced recusant historiography, see Patrick McGrath, “Catholic Historians and the English Reformation,” *Blackfriars* 45 (1963): 108–15, 156–63.

³ R. B. Manning, *Religion and Society in Elizabethan Sussex* (London, 1969); and Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Lancashire* (London, 1975). There is a more limited treatment of local Catholics in Peter Clark, *English Provincial Society from Reformation to Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent, 1500–1640* (Brighton, 1977); G. A. J. Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire* (London, 1975); and Mervyn James, *Family, Lineage and Civil Society: A Study of Society, Politics and Mentality in the Durham Region, 1500–1640* (Oxford, 1974).

⁴ See Anthony Fletcher, *A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex 1600–1660* (London, 1975), pp. 97–98, 101; R. B. Manning, “Catholics and Local Office Holding in Elizabethan Sussex,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 35 (1962): 47–61; J. A. Williams, *Bath [and Rome: the Living Link]* (Bath, 1963), p. 14 (hereafter cited as *Bath*); and Alan Davidson, “Roman Catholicism in Oxfordshire, 1580–1640” (Ph.D. diss., University of Bristol, 1970), p. 33 (hereafter cited as “Oxfordshire”), where he identifies no fewer than five Catholic sheriffs. There are instances in Kent of known Catholics serving on ecclesiastical commissions (see Christopher Buckingham, “Catholic Recusancy in Kent, 1559–1800,” *Cantium* 1 [1969]: 1–14, 42–52, 116–22).

⁵ John Bossy, “The English Catholic Community, 1603–1625,” in *The Reign of James VI and I*, ed. A. G. R. Smith (London, 1973), pp. 91–105 (hereafter cited as “English Catholic Community, 1603–1625”). Davidson describes the county boundary as “no more than an academic convenience” (“Oxfordshire,” pp. 15–16). See also J. C. H. Aveling, “Some Aspects of Yorkshire Catholic Recusant History, 1558–1791,” *SCH* 4 (1967): 98–121 (hereafter cited as “Some Aspects”).

⁶ Lawrence Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy* (Oxford, 1967), p. 345. J. A. Hilton (“Catholicism in Elizabethan Northumberland,” *Northern History* 13 [1977]: 44–58 [hereafter cited as “Elizabethan Northumberland”]) finds both county and regional

"Catholic connection," as it were—acquires some of its interest from this very geographical dispersion.

The significant territorial unit for English Catholics was that of the protective seigneurial household or cluster of households. One is struck by the recurrence, generation after generation, of the names of the prominent recusant families who kept the faith alive. Many of their sons became clergy, many of their daughters nuns; their large houses provided the room for clandestine services and the protection needed by priests whose very presence in England was, theoretically, a capital crime. The seventeenth century was, for recusancy too, the "age of the gentry."⁷ Discussion of these lay Catholics was long dominated by a tradition of "sufferings." Until the beginning of this century such a perspective was supported by the available evidence—largely English government records and memoirs of missionaries. Studies based chiefly on the statute book, "recusant rolls,"⁸ and state trials, with a dollop of Catholic martyrology thrown in, naturally portrayed the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as an era of persecution. The existence of harsh legislation was often mistaken for evidence that it was enforced.⁹

marriage bonds among Catholics of Northumberland, Durham, Cheshire, and the North Riding (see also J. A. Hilton, "Catholicism in Jacobean Durham (1)," *RH* 14 [1977]: 78–85, and "Catholics in Caroline Durham, 1625–1642," *Durham County Local Historical Society Bulletin* 19 [1976]: 9–18; and J. S. Morrill, *Cheshire 1630–1660: County Government and Society during the English Revolution* [Oxford, 1974], p. 4).

⁷ As recently reemphasized by K. J. Lindley, "The Lay Catholics of England in the Reign of Charles I," *JEH* 22 (1971): 199–221. The studies cited in notes 3–6 above corroborate the generalization. Occasionally other patterns may be perceived, e.g., some yeoman recusancy independent of gentry leadership in James (n. 3 above), p. 141, and Hilton, "Elizabethan Northumberland," p. 55. There was also urban Catholicism—as in Bath (Williams, *Bath*, pp. 1–17), Newcastle (James, pp. 138–39), and Chichester (Fletcher, p. 99). K. R. Wark (*Elizabethan Recusancy in Cheshire* [Chetham Society Series 3, vol. 19, 1971], p. 132) finds recusancy in that county concentrated in the city of Chester, but that pattern was elsewhere unusual. There are few monographs on the gentry families, although a dynastic approach would be as useful as the county studies (but see Godfrey Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden* [Newport (Monmouthshire), 1953] and Joan Wake, *The Brudenells of Deane* [London, 1954]). The annual listing of "Accessions to Repositories" in *RH* indicates the wealth of family source material which is becoming available.

⁸ The problems of interpretation presented by the recusant rolls are described briefly by J. A. Williams, "Recusant Rolls: Short Guides to Records. No. 11," *History* 50 (1965): 193–96; and more extensively by Hugh Bowler, ed., *Recusant Roll No. 2 (1593–94)*, CRS, vol. 57 (London, 1965), pp. vii–cxiv. The identification of individual English Catholics is a vexed question for many reasons. The *Literary and Biographical History of the English Catholics* by J. Gillow (5 vols. [London, 1885–1902]) is incomplete. Basic biographical data is often lacking because it exists not in public records but in private and/or foreign archives, often complicated by the use of aliases. Such information as has been found has often been misinterpreted, and sometimes concealed, by conforming descendants.

⁹ Statistics alone, of course, do not measure the effect of persecution. But it is clear that the period of intense pressure on Catholics was roughly 1577–1615, with two

The great value of the county studies has been to demonstrate in detail how mistaken this picture was, and how normal, even uneventful, was the life led by many English Catholics.¹⁰ In the upper levels of society, at least, we can trace a long tradition of civility and tacit understanding between Protestant and Catholic which could be sustained even in periods of political crisis. Religion served as a pretext for occasional legal or even physical attacks upon Catholic gentry, but investigations of such incidents usually turn up the familiar motives for local feuding—personality, property, and prestige. Pressure from the central government for enforcement of the penal laws was intermittent, and local initiative was often lacking. The laws on recusancy permitted considerable delay and evasion, and there were “private arrangements” between known Catholics and officialdom.¹¹ Even convicted recusants enjoyed a relationship with the government which was “something nearer to that of joint participants in a highly sophisticated game than . . . that of persecutor and persecuted.”¹²

In short (and this is a point to which I will return) the county studies have quite failed to provide a grass-roots background for the national politics of no-popery.¹³ It is doubtless partly for this reason that the county studies, and much other recent scholarship on recusant history, have not had a more immediate impact on general English history. But until recently there was also lacking a work that would tie together the local studies and provide a new overview of English Catholic history.

subsequent short periods at the beginning of the Civil War and during the Popish Plot scare. The last execution was in 1680 (see Geoffrey Nuttall, “The English Martyrs 1535–1680: A Statistical Review,” *JEH* 22 [1971]: 191–97).

¹⁰ The most influential work seems to have been the doctoral dissertation of F. X. Walker, “The Implementation of the Elizabethan Statutes against Recusants, 1581–1603” (University of London, 1961). Examples of gentry solidarity abound in the studies cited above—Anstruther (pp. 117–19) shows how strong it could be even during the Gunpowder Plot scare; Fletcher (pp. 101–3) details the skepticism of the local authorities concerning hostile rumors about their recusant neighbors.

¹¹ E. Elliott Rose examines the complexities of the laws, the possibilities of evasion, and the “private arrangements” in *Cases of Conscience: Alternatives Open to Recusants and Puritans under Elizabeth and James I* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 11–113.

¹² John Bossy (speaking of the 1620s), “The Catholic Community of Yorkshire, 1558–1791: A Review Article,” *Ampleforth Journal* 78, no. 2 (1973): 27–32.

¹³ This comes out clearly in J. S. Morrill’s survey of the background to the Civil War in a variety of English counties (*The Revolt of the Provinces: Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War, 1630–1650* [New York, 1976], p. 1), where local Catholicism figures almost not at all. Similarly, although Derek Hirst, in *The Representative of the People? Voters and Voting in England under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge, 1975) regards antipopery as “the one genuine religio-political conviction of ordinary people in the early seventeenth century” (p. 146), he does not indicate that the activities of local Catholics had anything to do with it.

Two works of synthesis have now appeared in close succession—one by J. C. H. Aveling, the historian of Yorkshire recusancy, the other by John Bossy, whose earlier synopses of Elizabethan and Jacobean Catholicism are well known.¹⁴ Together they should oust the old caricatures, although their emphases and conclusions differ. Bossy's work, *The English Catholic Community, 1570–1850*, widely and enthusiastically acclaimed, has itself ensured a recognized place within academic history for the study of Catholic England.¹⁵ Building on the county studies, Bossy has explored the internal social and religious structure of English Catholicism—its clerical organization and social composition, its devotional practices, and the relations between clergy and laity. The resulting work is not only the first detailed study of three centuries of English Catholicism but also an innovative contribution to religious and social history.

The history of English religion has not been noted either for its comparative insights or for its imaginative use of ancillary disciplines; Bossy's book is rich in both. The influence of the *Annales* school and of French religious sociology is evident;¹⁶ and the methods of social anthropology have been borrowed for sections called "Separation of Meats and Days" and "Rites of Passage" in which Bossy describes the fasting and feasting calendar; the baptism, marriage and burial practices; and the educational traditions by which the Catholic community defined itself. For the social histo-

¹⁴ J. C. H. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe: The Catholic Recusants in England from Reformation to Emancipation* (London, 1976) (hereafter cited as *Handle and Axe*); John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570–1850* (London, 1975) (hereafter cited as *Community*). A previous survey by David Mathew (*Catholicism in England, 1535–1935*, 3d ed. [London, 1955]) remains useful but is very short. Mention should also be made both of Patrick McGrath's *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I* (London, 1967), which suggested that Puritans and Papists had "more in common than they would have cared to admit" (p. ix) and thus anticipated themes which both Aveling and Bossy explore, and of the recent publication of R. Adrian Morey, *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I* (London, 1978).

¹⁵ The most enthusiastic review was by Lawrence Stone (*New York Review of Books* [February 3, 1977]) who concluded that the book "in one giant stride drags the history of the Catholic community in England into the forefront of modern historiography," and that "in almost all important respects it is correct" (cf. somewhat more questioning notices by Eamon Duffy, in *JEH* 27 [1976]: 447–50; by Sheridan Gilley in *DR* 94 [1976]: 294–99; and by David M. Lunn in *Heythrop Journal* 17 [1976]: 432–34). Christopher Haigh's very critical analysis and comparison of Bossy and Aveling appears in *HJ* 21 (1978): 181–86. A. D. Wright, "Catholic History, North and South," *Northern History* 14 (1978): 126–51, which explores Bossy's definition of the Catholic community, came to my attention when this article was in press. Wright argues for the importance of "the context of the Counter-Reformation on the continent and beyond Western Europe" (p. 131).

¹⁶ The influence of the religious sociology of Gabriel Le Bras is more explicit in John Bossy's county study, "Four Congregations in Rural Northumberland, 1750–1850," *RH* 9 (1967): 88–119.

rian, English Catholicism provides "an intelligible field of study" with peculiar advantages. The community before Emancipation is a group small enough to be explored through a lengthy time period without losing track of primary sources. Yet it is diversified enough not to tempt the historian too far into the byways of local history. It provides a microcosm of society—north and south, town and country, lowlands and uplands, industrializing and agrarian—richer than that offered by any county history.¹⁷

Bossy's study amply demonstrates the benefits for English historians of immersion in a field of European history—in this case, early modern socioreligious European history. But despite the borrowing of methods and insights from European history, the text is focused almost exclusively on England. This is perhaps surprising given Bossy's previous work in most of which he emphasized the interplay between princely and papal diplomacy, domestic English politics and the internal concerns of the English Catholic community. Essays on Elizabethan and Jacobean Catholicism seemed to presage a full-scale study rather different in kind from the one that has appeared.¹⁸ In this case, Bossy has opted to stay on one side of the English Channel and largely away from politics of any kind.

This apolitical and Anglocentric approach was not only dictated by practical considerations; it appears to represent a shift in the author's perception of his subject. Bossy states explicitly that he is "not primarily concerned with the relation of minority to majority, considered either as a state or as a church, but with the body of Catholics as a social whole and in relation to itself, with its internal constitution and the internal logic of its history."¹⁹ The temporal divisions of the book reflect events—from the beginning of the mission to the restoration of the hierarchy—whose social and religious effects can be discussed independently of political context.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Bossy's treatment of the northeast of England in *Community*, pp. 84–91. The almost total omission of London creates a serious distortion, however.

¹⁸ John Bossy, "The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism," *PP*, no. 21 (April 1962), pp. 39–59; and "English Catholic Community, 1603–1625" (see n. 5 above). Also, "English Catholics and the French Marriage: 1577–1581," *RH* 5 (1959): 2–16; "Rome and the Elizabethan Catholics: A Question of Geography," *HJ* 7 (1964): 135–49; "Henry IV, the Appellants and the Jesuits," *RH* 8 (1965): 80–122; and his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, "Elizabethan Catholicism: The Link with France" (Cambridge University, 1971).

¹⁹ *Community*, p. 5. The eccentricity of this approach will be evident to students of the field. Studies both Catholic and Protestant have centered precisely on the "relation of minority to majority." This is true not only of the traditional themes of Catholic historiography—martyrology, debates on the hierarchy, Catholic emancipation—but also of more recent articles such as that by Robin Clifton ("The Popular Fear of Catholics during the English Revolution," *PP*, no. 52 [August 1971], pp. 23–55).

Rome is mentioned only in passing, figuring but as the midwife to developments conceived entirely within the English Catholic community. Bossy insists on "the relatively small part which external enactments, whether they emanated from the political or the spiritual sovereign, had in accounting for its existence, forming its characteristics, or altering the course of its progress."²⁰

Having cleared the air of anachronistic polemic by establishing the Englishness of English Catholicism, Bossy appears ready to leave others to carry on the reintegration of Catholics into English social and religious history.²¹ The study of grass-roots Catholicism will undoubtedly be stimulated as local studies test and amplify his hypotheses. Historians of other religious groups will be inspired to reexamine their traditional categories of analysis. In these ways, *The English Catholic Community* will itself work to fulfill the belief expressed in Bossy's concluding words: "The history of the Catholic community has something to contribute to the history of the country at large."

Yet the particular nature of this "contribution," as Bossy understands it, is surprising enough to have been commented on (although not much explored) by almost all his reviewers. His thesis—a central radical argument that informs his entire analysis—is that English Catholicism was a sect after 1560, not the remnants of a church, and was fated to remain a sect. Only those groups (notably the Jesuits) that early recognized this and could adapt quickly to the new, missionary situation could do much to nurture the sectarian community. Finally, Bossy appears to believe that the vitality of Catholicism in the period before 1850 consisted precisely in its nonestablished sectarian character which freed it from the dead hand of clerical "hierarchicalism." English Catholicism was a branch of the "English nonconforming tradition" and should be so treated by historians. One might even infer that Bossy finds the most convincing evidence of the "Englishness" of English Catholics in their nonconformity to the Church of England.

²⁰ *Community*, p. 296. Individual popes receive exactly six index references; there is no separate entry for papacy, Curia, or Holy Office; the Congregation of Propaganda Fide is named only four times.

²¹ Bossy's most recent work deals with social history in a framework which is geographically as well as temporally extended—Catholic Europe from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century (see John Bossy, "The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe," *PP*, no. 47 [February 1970], pp. 51–70; "The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Ireland, 1596–1641," *HS* 8 [1971]: 155–69; "Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Century," *SCH* 10 [1973]: 129–43; and "The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation," in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, ser. 5, no. 25 [1975]: 21–38).

A corollary of this "sectarian" model is a redrawing of the graph of English Catholic numbers, rejecting the image of a "dwindling minority" in favor of examining the "emergence of recusancy."²² According to the traditional view, there was in 1560 a large, amorphous body of Catholic sympathizers which was strikingly reduced in number during the next eighty years, leaving a declining group which had almost disappeared when the Irish arrived in the nineteenth century. The first challenge to this stereotype came from John Aveling whose studies of Yorkshire Catholicism from 1558 to 1790 covered a sufficiently long time span to establish a demographic pattern.²³ Using Aveling's findings and more fragmentary figures for other counties, Bossy argues that there was a steady increase in recusancy from 1570 to 1640 (assuming, for statistical purposes only, a nil figure for 1560–70).²⁴ By 1603, the number of actual (if not judicially convicted) recusants had reached 30,000–40,000, and it rose to 60,000 by 1641. After that date, growth leveled off and the community numbered only 80,000 in 1770 on the eve of a new expansionary period.²⁵

²² This was also the approach of the early studies of Yorkshire recusancy by A. G. Dickens, "The First Stages of Romanist Recusancy in Yorkshire, 1560–1590," *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 35 (1940–43): 147–82.

²³ J. C. H. Aveling, *Post-Reformation Catholicism in East Yorkshire, 1558–1790*, East Yorkshire Local History Society (York, 1960); *The Catholic Recusants of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1558–1790*, Proceedings of Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society (Leeds, 1963) (hereafter *West Riding*); *Northern Catholics: The Catholic Recusants of the North Riding of Yorkshire* (London, 1966); *Catholic Recusancy in York 1558–1791*, CRS Monograph Series, no. 2 (London: 1970). A general view of Aveling's findings is given by him in "Some Aspects" (see n. 5 above). Generalizing from any county is risky, but the size and varied geographical and social conditions of Yorkshire make it perhaps as useful a "sample county" as any could be.

²⁴ Bossy does not argue that there was no continuity in the Catholic community or that there was no recusancy in the decade 1560–1570, only that the latter cannot be quantified. For him 1570 provides a workable statistical starting point. Moreover, it is compatible with his belief that the Catholic revival of the 1570s which seems to be in back of increasing recusancy figures was due principally to the activity of the seminary priests. Alternative explanations might be labeled "survivalist" and "spontaneous," respectively. The survivalists would emphasize the retention of Catholic practices and continuing activity of Marian priests during the early Elizabethan period. Proponents of this explanation point to evidence of considerable recusancy before 1570 (Haigh [n. 3 above], pp. 247–52) or deny that recusancy was necessary at all, explaining that the Catholic aristocracy was so dominant in some areas that the Anglican settlement was not put into effect there for decades (e.g., Hilton, "Elizabethan Northumberland" [n. 6 above], p. 46). Aveling departs from essentially clerical explanations, tracing a spontaneous revulsion from the Church of England in the 1570s which went in two directions—one Puritan and the other Catholic. This revival, in his view, created a group of enthusiastic exiles who pushed Allen into missionary plans he had not previously entertained. Thus the seminarians were, in fact, products of the Catholic revival (see *Handle and Axe* [n. 14 above], chap. 2).

²⁵ *Community*, pp. 182–94.

Although there are logical connections between the two lines of argument—the one on Catholic numbers and the other defining the community as essentially sectarian—it is not clear that they need stand or fall together. While the argument for growth rather than steady decline is suggestive, the insistence on the self-contained character of the community is misleading and creates new problems of interpretation as it solves old ones. As reviewers have noted, there is something decidedly odd about a history of English Catholicism which scarcely mentions anti-Catholicism, a persistent feature of English politics for nearly 300 years. The historian coming to this work with a background, for example, in diplomacy, politics, or Puritan ideology, will find it difficult to connect what he already knows about these topics with what he now learns about Catholics. Like the county studies on which it builds, *The English Catholic Community* does little to explain why Catholicism was for so long such a live political issue. If anything, the emphasis on the average, pacific lay Catholic has the effect of pushing the question of anti-Catholicism further into the realm of pathological political psychology, where at least one recent study has tried to locate it.²⁶ But this is not—or certainly not wholly—where it belongs. The special role of Catholicism in early modern English politics makes sense, not nonsense; it illuminates both English political assumptions and the nature of English Catholicism.

The remainder of this essay will be devoted to exploring the “sense” behind anti-Catholicism in one period—the early seventeenth century. Recent scholarship indicates that this was the high point of the English Counter-Reformation. It was also a time when disputes within the Catholic community hardened in ways that shaped subsequent Catholic historiography. These disputes, historical and historiographical, need not be discarded as the garbage of an outmoded polemical tradition; they offer suggestions of value for comparative history. In addition, this era poses difficult and as yet unanswered questions about the relations between religion and politics. I shall suggest that Bossy’s sectarian model must be supplemented with other models if historians are to explore all that English Catholic history has to contribute to the history of the country at large.

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²⁶ Carol Z. Wiener, “The Beleagured Isle: A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism,” *PP*, no. 51 (May 1971), pp. 27–62.

The Elizabethan period has traditionally been seen as the peak of the English Counter-Reformation. Crucial it certainly was, as the first steps were taken to ensure the future of English Catholicism; and attractive, too, in its martyr-heroes such as Campion. Catholic historians of this period have been drawn to celebrate them and their age, much as the early Christian historians lingered over the first martyrs and the apostolic age.²⁷ Abandon the hagiographic perspective, however, and the picture is very different; it becomes clear that the fruits of the Counter-Reformation were reaped in the seventeenth century. Not only recusant statistics but also the growth of the missionary priesthood, of an overseas Catholic education system, and of Catholic literary production, all culminate in the early seventeenth century.

The vitality of Catholicism in this period is indicated by the marked rise in priestly vocations from within the community—men who, their training completed, often returned to their own counties as missionary priests. Collective biography of the clergy is an area in which recusant history is relatively strong, and appropriately so, given the dependence of the community on priests who could administer the sacraments.²⁸ Behind the “lives of the saints” façade

²⁷ Aveling has described the English Catholic tradition as one of “Holy History or ‘Salvation History,’ written to edify and sustain a people under heavy pressure and defeat, to show the hand and judgment of God in their sufferings, martyrs, and the deaths of their persecutors” (“Some Aspects” [n. 5 above], p. 101).

²⁸ Primary sources relating to many branches of the clergy and female orders have been published by CRS. The secular clergy, whose records are at Westminster Cathedral Archives, have not found a modern historian. Godfrey Anstruther has published a *Dictionary of the Secular Clergy of England and Wales, 1558–1800*, vol. 1, *Elizabethan* (Ware, 1968) and vol. 2, *Early Stuarts* (1603–1659); vol. 3, *Later Stuarts* (1660–1714); vol. 4, *Georgian* (1715–1800) (Wakering [Essex], 1975, 1976, 1977). See also T. A. Birrell, “English Catholics without a Bishop, 1655–1672,” *RH* 4 (1957–58): 142–78. For the Jesuits, see Bernard Basset, *English Jesuits from Campion to Martindale* (London, 1967); and Henry Foley, ed., *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, 7 vols. (London, 1875–1909). For the Benedictines, see H. Norbert Birt, *Obit Book of the English Benedictines, 1600–1912* (Edinburgh, 1913; reprint, Boston, 1970, with introduction and bibliography by D. M. Lunn); D. M. Lunn “Origins and Early Development of the Revived Benedictine Congregation, 1588–1647” (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1970); and “The English Cassinese (1611–50),” *RH* 13 (1975): 62–69. Lunn’s study of the Benedictines in the period 1540–1688 is in *From Reformation to Revolution: English Benedictines 1540–1688* (London, in press). The Franciscans were very active by mid-seventeenth century, but they attracted less criticism than the Jesuits and have done much less to publicize their work (see Thaddeus, *Franciscans in England, 1600–1850* [London, 1898]; CRS, vol. 24 [London, 1923], and the excellent biography by John B. Dockery of *Christopher Davenport* [London, 1960]). Fewer in number were the Capucins, for whom see Laurence Cuthbert Hess, *The Capuchins*, 2 vols. (London, 1928); and F. X. Martin, “The Capuchin Mission to England and Scotland . . . 1608–1660,” in *Miscellanea Melchior de Pobladora*, ed. Isidorus a Villapadierna, 2 vols. (Rome,

presented by many of these studies, in the quiet annals of those who survived rather than achieving rapid martyrdom, one can trace the swelling ranks of the priesthood, both seculars and regulars. Both the absolute number of priests in England and the ratio of priests to the Catholic population reached a level in the 1630s not equaled until the 1850s.²⁹ As every report to Rome lamented, quantity was not matched by quality. But the increase in numbers made the sacraments more accessible, and it had political repercussions. The increase was most dramatic in the regular orders, which had few English members and no English organization during the Elizabethan period. While the number of seculars in England nearly doubled from 1600 to 1640, the number of regulars more than quadrupled—and among the regulars, the most startling expansion was experienced by the Jesuits who came to dominate the English mission.³⁰ Thus, the “Jesuit invasion” perceived by English Protestants was not an imagined phenomenon.

1964). For the Carmelites see B. Zimmerman, *Carmel in England 1615–1849* (London, 1889); for the Dominicans see Godfrey Anstruther, *A Hundred Homeless Years: English Dominicans, 1558–1658* (London, 1958); and for the Minims see Patrick Whitmore, *The Order of Minims in Seventeenth-Century France* (The Hague, 1967) for individual English and Scottish members. John Aveling has estimated that more than 5,000 English men and women entered the religious life abroad between 1598 and 1642; this figure excludes those who only studied abroad and the men who became secular priests (*Handle and Axe*, pp. 98–99).

²⁹ See Bossy (*Community*, p. 422) who estimates 700 priests in 1630, which declined to under 400 by 1780, then rose again to 700 by 1850. He estimates (p. 22) that there was an oversupply of priests in the 1630s for the paid work available. Between 1600 and 1640 the number of lay Catholics had risen, according to his estimate, by roughly 50 percent, while the number of clergy had increased by 150 percent. The clergy in the period 1610–1660 were “overwhelmingly recruited” from the gentry classes (pp. 198–99).

³⁰ The seculars, who had provided most—if not the most famous—of the Elizabethan clergy martyrs (Nuttall [n. 9 above], p. 193), continued to dominate the mission numerically with 400–450 in England during the 1630s. The Jesuits, who had only eighteen men in England in 1598, had expanded to 150–200 by the 1630s, and the Benedictines in England to 50–60 (Bossy, *Community*, pp. 209, 216, 227; John Aveling, “The Education of Eighteenth-Century English Monks,” *DR* 79 [1961]: 135–52). Jesuits, Benedictines, and Franciscans all formed English provinces during the early seventeenth century; there were Dominican and Carmelite superiors, while Capucins, Minims, and Oratorians existed as individual members of foreign provinces. The concentration of the missionaries in the south and east of England fed Protestant anxieties. For a variety of reasons—an inadequate system for placing new missionaries, the presence of the superiors there, the protection offered by foreign ambassadors, the lure of wealthy potential patrons—London attracted a particularly large number of clergy (Bossy, *Community*, pp. 209, 225–27, 419; William R. Trimble, “The Embassy Chapel Question, 1625–1660,” *Journal of Modern History* 18 [1946]: 97–107). The omission of London from Bossy’s account is thus particularly strange. The “high visibility” of priests in the capital, which was also the center of the English communications network, ensured the diffusion of reports elaborating the activities and exaggerating the total numbers of the missionaries.

The priests were the products of a system of overseas Catholic education designed to serve both prospective missionaries and the other sons and daughters of the Catholic aristocracy. This network had its roots in the Elizabethan period but did not become firmly established until the seventeenth century. Cardinal Allen's foundation at Douai was under secular control (save for the period 1589–1613), but the other important centers of Catholic education for boys were founded and controlled by the Jesuits.³¹

The quantity and quality of Catholic literature also reflect the vigor of early Stuart Catholicism. The clandestine conditions in which this literature had to be produced and distributed did not prevent a lively trade in books printed secretly in England or smuggled in from the continent. This literature is almost unknown territory both to historians and to theologians. The only recusant writings that have attracted much interest are those with apparent political implications, the subject of T. H. Clancy's *Papist Pamphleteers*.³²

Scholars of literature have been quicker to recognize the interest presented by Catholic writing. A. C. Southern's *Elizabethan Recusant Prose, 1559–1582* reminded us of the body of Catholic devotional writing; and Louis Martz has demonstrated how much it contributed to the development of writers such as Donne, Herbert, and Crashaw. Post-Reformation Catholic mystical writings have begun to attract historians of religion, long familiar with the medieval prototypes.³³

³¹ A. C. F. Beales, *Education under Penalty . . . 1547–1689* (London, 1963); Peter Guilday, *English Catholic Refugees on the Continent, 1558–1795* (New York, 1914), chap. 6; Francis Courtney, "English Jesuit Colleges in the Low Countries, 1593–1774," *Heythrop Journal* 4 (1963): 254–63. A suggestive account of the role of the overseas Irish foundations in forming modern Irish culture is given by F. X. Martin ("Ireland, the Renaissance, and the Counter-Reformation," *Topic* 13 [1967]: 23–33). A comparative assessment of the English foundations would be valuable.

³² Thomas H. Clancy, *Papist Pamphleteers: The Allen-Persons Party and the Political Thought of the Counter-Reformation in England, 1572–1615* (Chicago, 1964); and Leona Rostenberg, *The Minority Press and the English Crown: A Study in Repression, 1558–1625* (Nieuwkoop, 1971). See also Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1977) which catalogs 630 publications of Anglican, Puritan, Presbyterian, and Catholic writers and its sequel, *Religious Controversies of the Jacobean Age* (London, 1978).

³³ A. C. Southern, *Elizabethan Recusant Prose, 1559–1582* (London, 1950); Helen White, *English Devotional Literature 1600–1640* (Madison, Wis., 1931); Louis B. Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation* (New Haven, Conn., 1959); and John R. Roberts, ed., *A Critical Anthology of English Recusant Devotional Prose, 1558–1603* (Pittsburgh, 1966). The lack of Anglican devotional literature, as White pointed out long ago, led to a large body of translation and adaptation of Catholic work—"an astonishing intellectual commerce between the lines" (p. 73)—and, in particular, a "constant stream" of English translations of *Imitatio Christi*. For the latter, see David

The relative obscurity of Catholic literature was due, in part, to difficulty of access. Some items have left no known extant copy, many others are rare and often located in private libraries which were not searched for the Short Title Catalogue (STC) or for its "Wing" sequel. A "Catholic STC" and a "Catholic Wing"³⁴ now permit us to plot the rise of this book production to a peak in the years before the civil war, after which it fell off. Even in the later Stuart period, when both the quality and quantity seem to have declined, it was a corpus of writings far larger than those of the Baptists and Quakers and second only to the established church, while in quality it has been compared "very favorably . . . to that of the Church of England literature these books provoked and answered."³⁵ Seventeenth-century Anglicans not only read this recusant literature but also found it necessary to reply to it at length.

Crane, "English Translations of the *Imitatio Christi* in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *RH* 13 (1975): 79–100. For the early and continuing popularity of François de Sales see Elizabeth Stopp, "Healing Differences: St. Francis de Sales in Seventeenth-Century England," *Month*, n.s. 38 (1967): 51–71. On the mystics, see D. M. Lunn, "Augustine Baker (1575–1641) and the English Mystical Tradition," *JEH* 26 (1975): 267–77; and T. A. Birrell, "English Catholic Mystics in Non-Catholic Circles: The Taste for Middle English Literature and Its Derivatives from the Seventeenth Century to the Twentieth Century—I," *DR* 94 (1976): 60–81. The ecclesiastical historians among the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century recusants are dealt with by W. B. Patterson ("The Recusant View of the English Past," *SCH* 11 [1975]: 249–62), B. G. H. Wormald ("The Historiography of the English Reformation," *HS* 2 [1958]: 50–58), and Pontien Polman (*L'Élément historique dans la controverse religieuse du XVI^e siècle*, Catholic University of Louvain, Dissertations in Theology Series no. 2, vol. 23 [Gembloux, 1932]).

³⁴ A. F. Allison and D. M. Rogers, eds., *A Catalogue of Catholic Books in English Printed Abroad or Secretly in England, 1558–1640* (1956; reprint ed., London, 1968) lists over 600 titles, half again as many as had been known. Suppression or falsification of the names of authors, printers, and places of publication had hidden the English origin of many titles. Allison and Rogers searched 218 libraries, of which only 83 had been utilized by STC editors. For the period after 1640, see Thomas H. Clancy, *English Catholic Books, 1641–1700: A Bibliography* (Chicago, 1974). The Scholar Press has undertaken the facsimile reprint of the over 600 titles in Allison and Rogers under the rubric "English Recusant Literature, 1558–1640."

³⁵ Clancy, *English Catholic Books*, p. xiv. George Tavard, in "Scripture and Tradition among Seventeenth-Century Recusants" (*Theological Studies* 25 [1964]: 343–84), describes the mid-seventeenth century as a high point for English Catholic theology in terms of quality as well as quantity; see also his important new work *The Seventeenth-Century Tradition: A Study in Recusant Thought* (Leiden, 1978). David B. McIlhiney ("The Protestantism of the Caroline Divines," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 44 [1975]: 143–54) discusses the Anglican tracts against Rome. As Aveling has pointed out, seventeenth-century theology—both Anglican and Catholic—was so largely devoted to refuting the arguments of the other side that it constitutes a "mixed field" in which Anglican and Catholic writings must be examined together ("Some Aspects" [n. 5 above], pp. 104–5). See also Marvin O'Connell (*Thomas Stapleton and the Counter-Reformation* [London, 1964]) and Michael Richards ("Thomas Stapleton," *JEH* 18 [1967]: 187–99) about the man described by Anthony à Wood as "the most learned Roman Catholic of all his time."

But difficulty of access does not wholly account for the neglect of this corpus by the modern Anglo-American academic community. Scholars disposed to a near idolatry of Thomas More have shown almost no interest in influential later figures such as Robert Southwell and Robert Persons.³⁶ Does More lie on the safe side of a historical divide (perhaps Mary's reign) after which English Catholicism is perceived, even by twentieth-century scholars, as un-English, unpatriotic, and unprogressive? Identification of Protestantism with patriotism and progress is, of course, a legacy of the Whig historical tradition, of which in this as in other respects Macauley is a prime exemplar, asserting at one point that "the North owes its great civilization and prosperity chiefly to the moral effect of the Protestant Reformation, and . . . the decay of the southern countries of Europe is to be mainly ascribed to the great Catholic revival."³⁷ Such attitudes have not yet died out; W. K. Jordan described Catholic literature in the Elizabethan era as "increasingly un-English" and that of the early Stuart era as "weak, undistinguished, and unsystematic," adding that "during the reign of Charles I English Catholic thought almost disappears."³⁸

By many indices then—numbers, schools, clergy, literature—the Catholic community was flourishing in the early seventeenth century. English Catholicism would not experience such expansion again until the nineteenth century. Numerically, the Catholics may have been an even smaller minority of the population than has usually been supposed; but it was a vigorous, not a dying minority. We look in vain to the county studies for a key to Protestant alarm; for the organization of Catholicism was not based on the county. Its essence and its strength lay in networks of priests, of schools, and of book distribution that were thriving in the seventeenth century.

* * *

³⁶ Between 1560 and 1640, only one of More's works was published for an English audience, compared with no fewer than nineteen of Robert Persons's works. As Bossy has pointed out, Persons's devotional work was valued by Puritans such as Richard Baxter as well as by English Catholics ("Elizabethan Catholicism" [n. 18 above], pp. 230–32, 245–46). J. J. Scarisbrick has explored Persons's thought in "Robert Persons' Plans for the 'True' Reformation of England," in *Historical Perspectives, Studies in English Thought and Society in Honour of J. H. Plumb*, ed. Neil McKendrick (London, 1974), pp. 19–42. See also John E. Parish, *Robert Persons and the English Counter-Reformation*, Rice University Studies, no. 52, pt. 1 (Houston, 1966). Francis Edwards is preparing a biography of Persons.

³⁷ T. B. Macauley, "Ranke's *History of the Popes*" (1840; reprinted in *Critical and Historical Essays*, 2 vols., London, 1907), 2: 66.

³⁸ W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1932–40), 1: 372; 2: 492–93. Note the implication that in England Protestant writing was not open to continental influences.

If the quantifiable resurgence of Catholicism in the early Stuart era goes some way to explain the political fears that it evoked, even more important were those qualities which distinguished it from other sectarian movements. These were (a) the nature of the demands Catholicism made upon its adherents, especially insofar as they were members of the political elite; and (b) the status of Catholicism as an international religion. These two features cannot historically be separated, despite Bossy's argument for "the relatively small part that external enactments, whether they emanated from the political or the spiritual sovereign," had in creating and shaping the community.

Bossy has given two separate answers to the vexing question of how to define the members of the Catholic community in the seventeenth century; one is that the Catholics were recusants and only recusants (whether convict or not); the other is that the Catholic community was "the number of people making habitual use of the services of a missionary priest."³⁹ The two amount to the same thing only if one assumes (as he does) that the "church papist" (the believing Catholic who attended Anglican services so as to escape the legal and social penalties of recusancy) had virtually disappeared by 1600.

Before examining this question further, let us look at another feature of post-Reformation Catholicism that Bossy has described—the "separation of meats and days," or the fasting and feasting calendar. This ritual calendar, a legacy of pre-Reformation England, was a true indigenous contribution to the definition of post-Reformation Catholicism. Despite his evocative descriptions of the ritual calendar, Bossy does not wholly approve of it. He treats it as one of the "traditions of ritual folklore" that were ill-equipped to help Catholics survive in the new dispensation.⁴⁰ The missionary priests were themselves uneasy about the survival of these practices and discouraged them. Interestingly, the government appears to have been indifferent to the matter.⁴¹ We may well ask whether there was not some connection between these two responses.

³⁹ Bossy, *Community*, pp. 2, 193.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 110–19, 147–49. Visitors to England often remarked that continental fasting practices were less ascetic. Another such traditional ritual practice was "seasonal marriage"—abstention from marriage during Lent and Advent (see *ibid.*, pp. 145–46). Elsewhere ("Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Ireland" [n. 21 above]) Bossy has shown more sympathy for traditional practices which kept the faith rooted in local society.

⁴¹ For missionary unease, see Bossy, *Community*, pp. 115–16. He attributes the "benign neglect" of the government over fasting practices to the fact that the latter belonged "to a region of private social practices which in effect lay outside the field

"Seasonal nonconformity" was part of the old definition of what it meant to be an English Catholic; after 1570 the new definitions were imported from Rome via the seminary priests. It was these to which the government reacted, and strongly. Bossy seems to regard obedience to the directives of seminary priests as the sole legitimate means of distinguishing Catholic from non-Catholic. The first and most crucial of these imported requirements was that Catholics refuse to attend Anglican services in favor of hearing Mass. Bossy contends that by ca. 1600 this requirement had been accepted by lay Catholics as part of their self-definition, and that "church popery" had disappeared as an option. Here he parts company with John Aveling, whose work he elsewhere cites and uses extensively. Aveling finds "a very widespread practice of husbands and eldest sons of Catholic families being conformists" which persisted right up to 1700.⁴² Recusancy had existed before the mission, but it was the missionary priests who attempted to enforce it as a condition of Catholicism, and they met with resistance from many of the laity.

What—besides the desire to save one's skin and pocketbook—were the motives for this resistance? For one thing, refusal to attend church was a blatant challenge to authority, as Bossy himself well articulates—"a grave dereliction of social duty and a shocking example to sectaries and separatists . . . [which] suggested a neglect of the obligations of one's allegiance."⁴³ Then, too, the notion that attendance at service obliged one to follow the liturgy—and thus implied acceptance in detail of the liturgy's doctrinal implications—was a post-Reformation innovation in both Protestant and Catholic camps. As late as the eighteenth century, attendance at Mass was regarded by many English Catholics as an occasion for private prayer or devotional reading.⁴⁴

of legislation" (p. 110). This begs the issue, for chapels of ease and private possession of Catholic devotional articles might be similarly described. The crux would seem to be the distinction not between private and public, but between indigenous and imported (imported articles, imported priests). The secular-priest community was more attached than the regulars to the traditional feasting forms; indeed, this was one origin of the "Wisbech stirs" between seculars and Jesuits which initiated the archpriest controversy (pp. 117–18).

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 187; Aveling, "Some Aspects," p. 110.

⁴³ Bossy, *Community*, p. 124. The refusal of Henrietta Maria to attend her husband's coronation was (and was understood to be) a serious symbolic gesture, a break with the practice of Queen Anne, and an ill omen for the reign. The courtier, too, was duty bound to attend his sovereign on religious occasions, and English Catholic courtiers kept trying to get Roman dispensation for this practice—failing which, they persisted in it nonetheless (Rose [n. 11 above], pp. 75 ff.). The political, social, ethical, and legal implications of religious pluralism were felt to be very menacing (see the excellent discussion by Conrad Russell, "Arguments for Religious Unity in England, 1530–1650," *JEH* 18 [1967]: 201–26).

⁴⁴ Bossy, *Community*, pp. 130, 369.

Whatever the motives involved, we know from numerous studies that the decision to cease attending parish services came painfully to many laymen, and might be reached only after years, even decades, of wavering.⁴⁵ In time, Catholics were argued out of their traditionalist attitudes and into a sectarian one; but those who did the persuading came as emissaries of a centralized hierarchical church. It is a strange sect indeed whose central act of self-definition is reluctantly adopted at the behest of the pope. Meanwhile—in the days when nonconformity carried real threats to person and property—the option of family Catholicism was kept alive by church-papist heads of family and their heirs. Aveling puts it bluntly: “It was the Church-papists who saved the Catholic community.”⁴⁶

Missionary pressure rather than lay compunction was also responsible for the segregated performance of other “religious acts of a social not an individual character”—that is, baptism, marriage, and

⁴⁵ The confusions of the early decades of Elizabeth's reign are sketched by David Mathew, “The Approach to Recusant History,” *Dublin Review* 233 (1959): 24–32. Some missionaries tolerated church popery among their penitents, but they did not defend the practice in print. Rose describes arguments which could be or were used (by laymen) to justify church popery; but he himself believes that it was a closed option by 1600. However, Persons published a book against the practice in 1607, and the best-known “character” of a church-papist appeared in Earle's *Microcosmographie* of 1628 (Rose [n. 11 above], p. 69). A. J. Loomie (“King James I's Catholic Consort,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 34 [1971]: 303–16) describes Queen Anne's unsuccessful attempt to get Pope Paul V's approval for attendance at Protestant services (which she continued); Loomie remarks that Jesuits in Scotland seem to have pursued a more conciliatory policy about this practice as well as about reading Protestant books, etc. In “A Jacobean Crypto-Catholic: Lord Wotton,” *CHR* 53 (1967): 328–45, Loomie describes a convert who *did* receive tacit papal approval for attendance at Protestant services. The problem is whether to accept the Roman definition of “Catholic” (which Rome was willing to bend in Wotton's case) or to admit some validity to the English community's self-definition, which drew the line not at attendance, but at communion (Rose [n. 11 above], pp. 5–6). Communion was very seldom imposed by governmental authorities as a test, and many Catholics managed to avoid it by being “out of charity” with their neighbors at Easter time (*ibid.*, p. 69). Rose sees the task of the Jesuit missionaries after 1580 as “in particular to persuade Catholics to stand firm and refuse to go to church at the Queen's bidding” (*ibid.*, p. 43). “To bring the wrongness of such compromise home to the would-be Catholic was the first and main task of the seminary priests” (*ibid.*, p. 74). Success came slowly; Davidson (“Oxfordshire” [n. 4 above], pp. 18, 22) notes that as prominent a Catholic as Edmund Plowden attended church for years and concludes that one cannot equate Catholicism with recusancy until after 1688. Williams (*Bath* [n. 4 above], p. 13) instances a church papist who educated his family privately as Catholics and had several sons who became priests—hardly a man lukewarm in religion, albeit prudent. Fletcher ([n. 4 above] pp. 94–95, 98) describes a church papist of the 1620s whose wife and younger children were recusant, but who very deliberately inculcated in his son and heir the duty of church popery.

⁴⁶ Aveling, *Handle and Axe* (n. 14 above), p. 162. See also Hilton (“Catholicism in Jacobean Durham” [n. 6 above], p. 84) to the effect that the conformity of heads of households ensured their survival as gentry, “and, therefore, the continued existence of the Catholic community.”

burial. In each case, the missionaries were intent on keeping Catholics completely out of and away from the parish church, while the government—for mixed motives—wanted them in. Double baptisms and church marriages of Catholics were very common despite priestly opposition; burial in the churchyard (or even in the chancel—a right enjoyed by many gentry) was carried out if necessary by stealth or even by force. Over each of these rites of passage, the established church tried to assert its supervisory authority, full of social as well as religious significance—and the Catholic laity were more willing to recognize this authority than their priests would have liked.⁴⁷

A similar picture of lay compromise with the established church, only slowly and incompletely yielding to missionary insistence on segregation, emerges from investigations into the education of children in this period. Catholic schoolmasters and tutors were rather thicker on the ground than one might have supposed; and when apprenticeship or education required occasional conformity of the children, many Catholic parents protested little or not at all.⁴⁸ Even at the universities it was possible for young men to find sympathetic tutors and the opportunity for clandestine practice of their religion. The Inns of Court were notorious dens of popery.⁴⁹

Thus, the Catholic school system on the continent did not evolve because a "Catholic" education was impossible in England. It was in the first instance a seminary system, created to train priests,

⁴⁷ On marriages and baptisms, see J. C. H. Aveling, "Marriages of Catholic Recusants, 1559–1642," *JEH* 14 (1963): 69–83. Marriages withdrew from the church of England much sooner than baptisms, but even in the case of marriage, the missionaries in North Yorkshire were unable to impose recusancy before the 1590s (Aveling, *Northern Catholics* [n. 23 above], p. 149). Double baptisms persisted much longer (see Donald John Steel and Edgar R. Samuel, *Sources for Roman Catholic and Jewish Genealogy and Family History* [London, 1974], p. 857). M. J. Urquhart ("A Sussex Recusant Family," *Dublin Review* 512 [1967]: 162–70) describes a church papist who baptized his children in the church, but raised them all Catholic. On burials, see Steel and Samuel (persistence of burials in the church or churchyard, p. 839); and Godfrey Anstruther ("Recusant Burials," *London Recusant* 1 [1971]: 103–7). Wark found only a small number of recusants in Elizabethan Chesire who did not receive Anglican burial rites ([n. 7 above], p. 129).

⁴⁸ A. C. F. Beales ("A Biographical Catalogue of Catholic Schoolmasters in England. Part 1. 1558–1603," *RH* 7 [1964]: 267–89) found over 125 using only printed sources. More can be located by investigation of manuscript sources (see Timothy J. McCann, "Catholic Schoolmasters in Sussex, 1558–1603," *RH* 12 [1974]: 235–37; and Fletcher [n. 4 above], p. 100).

⁴⁹ On the universities, see Davidson, "Oxfordshire" (n. 4 above), pp. 598 ff. On the Inns of Court see Geoffrey de C. Parmiter, *Elizabethan Popish Recusancy in the Inns of Court*, Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, Special Supplement no. 11 (London, 1976); and Mathew, "Approach to Recusant History," p. 27, for seventeenth-century examples.

foster vocations, and—a matter of great importance—provide a network of lay support for the mission effort. That good Catholic parents were duty bound to send their children away (and this was only possible for relatively wealthy parents, and for very few of their daughters after the failure of Mary Ward's enterprise) was a view pushed by zealous missionaries who had the interests of their own establishments as much at heart as the salvation of young lay Catholics. The importance of recusant wives, very few of whom had been educated abroad, in keeping English Catholicism alive indicates the essentially clerical, rather than lay, character of the foreign school enterprise.⁵⁰

What becomes of the traditional picture of a heroic Catholic remnant forced out of the mainstream of English life by relentless and ubiquitous legal and social pressure? The conclusions sketched above modify it in three ways. First, the pressure was intermittent and often easily evaded. Second, from the community's point of view, the process may be seen (as Bossy describes it) as one of deliberate withdrawal—a series of positive and purifying decisions rather than a disordered retreat. But there is also a third perspective on the separation. Viewed from Rome, or even from across the Channel, it was a rescue operation designed to yank Catholic souls from the jaws of the Protestant hell. No compromise with heresy would be allowed; a new and more stringent definition of what it meant to be a Catholic must be imposed by the clergy upon an often reluctant laity. In short, when lay Catholics were told they must choose, it was as often by their clergy as by their government.

The precise nature of "Catholic" persistence and separation was not, then, predetermined, but evolved gradually out of a welter of conflicting opinions among laity and clergy. If we accept this, it is easier to understand the inconsistency between the draconian anti-Catholic legislation and its lax enforcement. Few in the Protestant political classes could view long-term religious pluralism as safe or tolerable. The reiterated demands in Parliament for stricter enforcement of the recusancy laws were more than political rhetoric. At the same time, it was not a priori clear how far honest Catholic gentlemen were prepared to go in separating themselves from the rest of the community.⁵¹

⁵⁰ On Mary Ward, see Guilday ([n. 31 above], chap. 6) and Aveling (*Handle and Axe* [n. 14 above], pp. 94–98). Very few females went abroad as students; they went chiefly to enter convents from which they did not return to England. The "educational" functions of the female orders were mainly limited to their novices.

⁵¹ By the 1580s, laymen could in theory suffer the penalties of treason for converting to Catholicism (and several did) and did in fact suffer for harboring seminary

Therefore, the legislation devised to deal with Catholics was largely "prudential" in character—intended for occasional use rather than continuous application.⁵² This was particularly true of the legislation that assimilated various aspects of Catholic practice and belief to treason and carried penalty to life and limb. Selective both in form and in application, it was aimed almost entirely at the seminary priests. Without undue exaggeration, its purpose can be described as the bodily extinction of the priests—or, what amounted to the same thing, their exclusion from England. Even here, the government had learned from the execution of Campion that there were dangers in making martyrs.

No general bloodbath of Catholic laity seems ever to have been intended, and the treason legislation was rarely employed against them.⁵³ The penal legislation, which did affect them, was also aimed selectively—at the upper classes. Many of them might have been systematically impoverished by recusancy fines, but few were.⁵⁴ This too was prudential legislation, a means of pressure on men of status which might force them back into obedience and conformity

priests (Rose [n. 11 above], pp. 11–12, 37, 42–44). See Martin J. Havran, "Parliament and Catholicism in England, 1626–1629," *CHR* 44 (1958): 273–89. The prohibition by Rome of any *communicatio in sacris* with schismatics (or pagans or heretics) was not novel, but except in Moslem territories it had scarcely been used since the fall of the Roman Empire (Rose, pp. 73–74).

⁵² "Penal laws were rather in the nature of Damoclean swords, ever-present, but lethal only when put into operation by proclamation" (J. A. Williams, "English Catholicism under Charles II: The Legal Position," *RH* 7 [1963]: 125). By the early seventeenth century, the financial needs of the government had injected a new element into recusant fining, and the more systematic application of the penal laws after the accession of James I seems to have had financial rather than political motivation.

⁵³ Rose (n. 11 above), pp. 21–22. Deficiencies in the records of common-law courts make it impossible to do a complete analysis of recusant trials for treason. But soundings indicate that, of the one-third of the Elizabethan martyrs who were lay folk, most suffered because of their active assistance to seminary priests (see, e.g., Aveling, *West Riding* [n. 23 above], p. 228; J. A. Hilton, "Catholicism in Elizabethan Durham," *RH* 14 [1977]: 1–8; and M. Claire Cross, "The Third Earl of Huntington and Trials of Catholics in the North, 1581–1595," *RH* 8 [1965–66]: 136–46). Others proven guilty of such assistance escaped the death penalty.

⁵⁴ Local studies have made this clear repeatedly. See Alan Davidson, "Oxfordshire Recusancy: 1580–1640," *Cake and Cockhorse*, 5 (Summer 1974): 167–75. For Worcestershire, see V. Burke ("The Economic Consequences of Recusancy in Elizabethan Worcestershire," *RH* 14 [1972]: 71–77) who concludes that the consequences were negligible for all but a very few recusants and that there was "no necessary connection . . . between recusancy and economic difficulties" (p. 75). Wark finds that "few suffered any demonstrable financial loss" in Cheshire ([n. 7 above], p. 136). Of the West Riding, Aveling says "There is a great mass of evidence that West Riding gentry generally escaped being seriously crippled by money penalties for recusancy . . . before 1642, there seems to be no known case where a recusant family in the Riding was ruined by fining" (*West Riding* [n. 23 above], p. 246).

and away from separatism. Otherwise loyal men would not be destroyed or ruined for private religious heterodoxy. Their public conformity would provide edifying examples of obedience. It would strengthen the polity, whereas their martyrdom might well weaken it. The policy was well summarized by Burghley in referring to the range of punishments possible under the anti-Catholic legislation: "*Omnia licent, yet omnia non expediunt.*"⁵⁵

Meanwhile, Catholics who obeyed the missionary demand for public defiance of the government were removed from positions of authority, both local and national.⁵⁶ A member of the responsible governing classes who blatantly refused to obey his sovereign's commands could not be permitted to remain in office without subverting the social order. Many Catholic gentry understood this point of view perfectly and were deeply troubled by the conflicting demands upon them. Left to devise their own *modus vivendi*, the Catholic laity might have opted for a church popery supplemented by private heterodox practice—less out of fear of punishment for recusancy than out of positive attachment to the society of which the established church was one manifestation.⁵⁷ Such a solution was adopted by most of those whom we would identify as "Puritan" in the years before 1640; and it certainly did not weaken the current in English life that they represented. The seminary clergy, products of a new, more rigorous post-Tridentine Catholicism, made unprecedented demands on the laity. They defined Catholicism as requiring the denial of the legitimacy of the establishment at every juncture where religion impinged on public social duty and social custom. It is noteworthy that when some of the clergy went even further and demanded a renunciation of political loyalty to the sovereign, the great majority of English Catholics refused to make a choice and continued to live in an uneasy but sincere conflict of loyalties.

⁵⁵ Cited by Joel Hurstfield in "Church and State, 1558–1612: The Task of the Cecils," *SCH* 2 (1965): 128.

⁵⁶ As late as 1601, a number of men who were prepared to protect Catholics, had Catholic wives and family members, and many of whom must themselves have been church papists, sat in Parliament—in the House of Commons as well as in the Lords (information provided by Alan Davidson of the History of Parliament Trust in a lecture, "Catholics in the Elizabethan House of Commons," delivered at the St. Ann's Conference on Catholic History, Summer 1977). There were Catholic JP's, sheriffs, and militia officers up to the eve of the Civil War (see, e.g., Williams, "English Catholicism under Charles II," pp. 129–30) and doctors of medicine, as well, who were prepared to take the necessary oaths in the church courts (see Fletcher [n. 4 above], p. 99, for a Sussex example).

⁵⁷ Aveling speculated on this possibility in Handle and Axe ([n. 14 above], p. 49). The church in Sweden developed this way.

* * *

Obsession with the question of Catholic political loyalty led many Protestants, both polemicists and historians, to neglect the experienced religion of Catholics. The image of the Catholic as turncoat or subversive did not encourage exploration, for example, of the religious motives for conversion to Catholicism. Such a question would scarcely have occurred to many nineteenth-century liberal historians, who assumed that Catholicism had nothing of spiritual value to offer.⁵⁸ Catholic historians, for their part, understandably impatient with the bias in the traditional political approach, have reacted by abandoning the questions on which it focused rather than redefining them. The sectarian model for Catholicism is an extreme point of this reaction, a deliberate de-emphasis of the hierarchical and international character of Catholicism.

But much is lost by ignoring the international nature of Catholicism and the preoccupation with lines of authority that derives in part from this internationalism. For these aspects of the Catholic church suggest as many lines of comparative study as the sectarian model. They have the additional advantage over the latter of helping to explain why anti-Catholicism with its specific targets and fears developed as it did in England.

Problems over delegation of authority will always plague a centralized church; in England, nonestablishment (indeed, illegality) created situations of Byzantine intricacy. Any temporary solution was likely to be upset by competition for resources within the growing and diversified body of missionaries. Seculars, Jesuits, Benedictines, Franciscans, and Carmelites had their own foundations on the continent and their own organizations within England. There was a sometimes undignified scramble for lay patronage in England, for papal permission to establish foundations overseas, and for foreign princely assistance in financing them.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Thus, e.g., S. R. Gardiner (*History of England 1603-1642*, 10 vols. [London, 1883-84]) writes: "The bait held out by the Papal Clergy appealed to the lower and more selfish side of human nature. Fantastic speculators like Sir Kenelm Digby, witty intriguers like Walter Montagu, brought no real strength to the cause which they espoused; whilst the gay court ladies, whose life had hitherto been passed in a round of amusement, were personally better by submitting to a sterner discipline than any which they had hitherto known. The arguments by which they had been moved appealed to motives too low to exercise any attractive force over the real leaders of the age, or to be otherwise than repulsive to the sense of honour which was the common property of English gentlemen" (8: 243).

⁵⁹ The Jesuits fought the beginning of a Benedictine mission in England until 1602. The Jesuit sponsored Sodality of the Immaculate Conception bound its English lay members to use only Jesuits as confessors; Bishop Richard Smith complained in 1631 that the Sodality was creating a lay faction hostile to the secular priests. In 1632, the

Against this background of financial rivalry there developed ideological disputes which raged internationally. The bitterest and longest began in the 1590s between the secular priests and the Jesuits. The Society of Jesus, founded as a missionary order, was from the outset better adapted in spirit and organization to the exigencies of the English mission than was the secular clergy body with its tradition of territorial organization and complex hierarchy. The seculars, disorganized after the death of Cardinal Allen in 1594, wanted a bishop who could confirm, ordain, organize the finances of the seculars, and discipline errant priests. Regarding the episcopacy as the legitimate organization not only for themselves but for the entire church, they lobbied ceaselessly in Rome for a return to "normalcy" until the institution of "vicars apostolic" in 1685. Several unsuccessful schemes for governing the English clergy and/or laity were meanwhile tried and abandoned—first a regime of arch-priests (1598–1621), then the appointment of two successive bishops. When the episcopal experiment broke down in 1631, the seculars were left for over fifty years with only an unofficial dean and chapter chosen among themselves.⁶⁰

The opposition of the regular clergy, Jesuits and Benedictines in particular, was largely responsible for Rome's reluctance to appoint English bishops and for the failure of the episcopal experiment of the 1620s.⁶¹ Many seculars bitterly resented what they saw as Jesuit special influence with the papacy, which was used both to block an episcopal appointment and to gain control of the major English colleges at Rome and Douai. Some seculars demanded that the pope withdraw the Jesuits from the English mission altogether.

Nor were these simply arid ecclesiastical disputes.⁶² The laity

English seculars petitioned to Rome listing twenty-nine gentry households where, they alleged, seculars had been "ousted" as chaplains by regulars making unfair and sometimes invalid claims, e.g., of especially wide facilities for absolution (Philip Hughes, *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in England* [London, 1942], pp. 339, 380–81, 413–74).

⁶⁰ The outlines of the struggle for a bishop before 1622 are given in *ibid.*, pp. 296–321. The archpriests were not granted faculties to ordain or confirm and had no authority over the regular missionaries in England. The second bishop, Richard Smith, died in France in 1655, having never returned to England after his 1631 departure. See Birrell, "English Catholics without a Bishop, 1655–1672" (n. 28 above).

⁶¹ D. M. Lunn, "Benedictine Opposition to Bishop Richard Smith (1625–1629)," *RH* 11 (1971): 1–20. The Council of Trent had decreed that regulars could not hear confessions or grant absolution without the "approbation" of local bishops; the application of this principle in England would have seriously curtailed the independence of the regulars.

⁶² Although Bossy regards them as such, he sees the secular desire for a bishop as an atavistic impulse unsuited to the missionary status of post-Reformation Catholicism

were disadvantaged by the unstable and fragmented supervision of the mission both in their practical affairs and in their spiritual guidance. Some means was needed of adjudicating disputes among Catholics over matters such as marriage arrangements and pious bequests; these involved priests and therefore could not safely be taken to an English court. And the laity needed assurance that the priests from whom they received the sacraments were legitimate and possessed of the faculties they claimed. From a Catholic point of view, England was "outlaw" territory; it attracted renegade priests fleeing discipline and sometimes served as a dumping ground for the poorer products of foreign orders. There were instances of priests who bargained for comfortable chaplaincies by claiming special powers of absolution they did not have; others apostatized and became government spies.⁶³ In the "popish plot" scares of the seventeenth century, these renegades figured ominously.

It was during the initial, and most intense, period of the dispute between seculars and Jesuits, between 1598 and 1602, that the activist secular priests (known as "Appellants" for their constant appeals to Rome) developed a line of propaganda that identified Jesuits with disloyalty and political subversion. It was then that some seculars entered into a curious practical alliance with the English government with the hopes of effecting an expulsion of the Jesuits. It was an alliance that would persist into the Restoration period and produce government-sponsored anti-Jesuit literature from Catholic hands that was as virulent as any Puritan publication.⁶⁴

(*Community* [n. 14 above], pp. 24–34). Elsewhere he has suggested that the juridical, territorial, parochial conformity approach to Catholic renewal was misguided and ultimately counterproductive (see "The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe" [n. 21 above], and "The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Ireland, 1596–1641" [n. 21 above]). But on both sides of the Catholic-Protestant divide, there were intense ecclesiastical concerns and a reluctance to abandon claims to universality before 1700. See Dermot Fenlon ("Encore une question: Lucien Febvre, The Reformation and the Schools of *Annales*," *HS* 9 [1974]: 65–81) who argues that "ecclesiastical and political history remain indispensable to any explanation of the Reformation," and that religious and ecclesiastical history are not separable, despite the earlier efforts of the *Annales* school to sweep "aside the themes dominating nineteenth-century historiography, [by] issuing edicts against the study of government in church and state" (p. 80).

⁶³ On the apostates, see Hughes ([n. 59 above], pp. 412–15) and D. M. Lunn ("William Rudesind Barlow, 1585–1656: Part II," *DR* 86 [1968]: 234–49) on Barlow using the English mission "as a means of ridding St. Gregory's of some troublesome inmates." The Irish church experienced similar difficulties (see P. J. Corish, "An Irish Counter-Reformation Bishop: John Roche," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 26 [1959]: 101–16, 313–30).

⁶⁴ Bossy, "Henry IV, the Appellants and the Jesuits" (n. 18 above); Clancy, *Papist Pamphleteers* (n. 32 above). For the Restoration period, see John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660–1688* (Cambridge, 1973).

What was the English government doing in this strange partnership? It might seem that precisely on the issue of a Catholic bishop, the government would be most sensitive. The architects of the original break between Henry VIII and Rome, and the subsequent propaganda of the English Reformation, had emphasized the priority of royal supremacy over doctrinal revolution, the nature of the papacy as a "foreign power," and the interpretation of the Catholic mission as the intrusion of "foreign jurisdiction." Whatever the attitude of the government, the role of a Catholic bishop in England would certainly need careful reexamination. Which episcopal rights and duties remained essential in the mission context? Which could appropriately be exercised in a country with an "official" Anglican bench of bishops occupying the traditional sees and fulfilling the traditional functions? Would not the English government regard the introduction of any bishop as a direct attack on its sovereignty? This last fear was exploited by the regulars who brought the episcopal experiment to an end in 1631; they garnered their lay support by arguing that Bishop Smith was claiming the powers of an "ordinary" and would bring down reprisals on the whole Catholic community.

In actuality, both the early Stuart and the Restoration monarchy proved ready to extend to a Catholic bishop the tacit toleration they denied to Jesuits.⁶⁵ The explanation for this lies in the historical development of European—and especially French—episcopacy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Episcopal reform had been one of the earliest manifestations of Catholic reform sentiment, anticipating by many years the papal assumption of reform initiative. Yet putting the episcopal ideal into practice was everywhere difficult. Obstacles were presented by the temporal responsibilities of bishops, by local particularism, and also by the privileges granted to the regular orders by the papacy. The independence of the dynamic new Counter-Reformation orders could be as troublesome as the obstinacy of the undynamic, unregenerate older ones.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ A. F. Allison, "Richard Smith, Richelieu and the French Marriage . . . 1624," *RH* 7 (1963-64): 148-211; and Martin Havran, *Catholics in Caroline England* (Stanford, 1962), ff. 84-89.

⁶⁶ See Paul Broutin, *L'Evêque dans la tradition pastorale du XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1953); Giuseppe Alberigo, "Carlo Borromeo come modello di vescovo nella chiesa post-Tridentina," *Rivista Storica Italiana* 79 (1967): 1031-52; and A. D. Wright, "The Significance of the Council of Trent," *JEH* 26 (1975): 353-62. The Roman Curia was far from unanimous on the solution for the novel problems of organizing the church in heretic and pagan lands. Some officials in the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, established in the early 1620s to supervise missions, were anxious to reestablish the episcopacy as soon as possible in England as well as Ireland. Problems of organization persisted also in the new worldwide mission of the church; the English seculars were by no means uniquely backward in resisting transformation into a flexible

Many of the episcopal reformers held an elevated view of the rights of their order vis-à-vis the papacy, a view which manifested itself in the Tridentine debates on the nature of *de iure divino* episcopacy. This independent stance persisted into the seventeenth century, and in France it became associated with elements of Gallicanism and also of Jansenism. Royal control over episcopal nominations there, as elsewhere, reinforced the bishops' attachment to the church national rather than the church international. The "Gallicanism" of French bishops was tempered by their desire for independence vis-à-vis the monarchy; the bishops of the Church of England (at least until 1625) saw themselves, and were seen as, supporting royal authority and the royal supremacy.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, a similarity of viewpoint between the two episcopal churches existed and was recognized. James I was fond of comparing Puritans with Jesuits; this analogy ought to be taken seriously, especially as it was shared on the English Catholic side by the secular priests. The tendency of the secular-Jesuit debate in France to take on the dimensions of Gallican versus ultramontane had parallels in England. Within the Appellant party and its heirs (by no means all of them seculars) a sort of English Gallicanism is visible.⁶⁸ The Appellants

missionary group. See, e.g., Guillaume de Vaumas (*L'Eveil missionnaire de la France* [Lyon, 1942], bk. 7) for the problems afflicting French missions in the early seventeenth century.

⁶⁷ For the *de iure divino* episcopacy debate, see H. Outram Evennett, *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation*, ed. John Bossy (Cambridge, 1968), chap. 5 and editor's postscript. The Puritan line developed in the 1630s, that the episcopacy derogated from the royal supremacy, was a new argument evoked by the *de iure divino* claims of the Laudian party and prompted by opposition to the Arminian doctrines of the same group (see William Lamont, *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion, 1600-1660* [London, 1969], pp. 62-63).

⁶⁸ Bossy argues that the "Gallican" label should not be applied to the Appellant party, who, after all, got their name from their constant appeals to ultramontane authority (*Community* [n. 14 above], p. 36). But it was the failure of these appeals, and of all subsequent efforts to inform Rome about the condition and needs of the English Catholic community, that nurtured the development of Gallican attitudes (see Hughes [n. 59 above], pp. 271-430). On the most spectacular instance of Anglo-Gallicanism, see R. I. Bradley, "Blacklo and the Counter-Reformation: An Inquiry into the Strange Death of Catholic England," in *From Renaissance to Counter-Reformation*, ed. C. H. Carter (New York, 1965), pp. 348-70. Among the Benedictines, the most important figures were Thomas Preston and John Barnes (see D. M. Lunn, "The Anglo-Gallicanism of Dom Thomas Preston, 1567-1647," *SCH* 9 [1972]: 239-46; Maurice Nédoncelle, *Trois aspects de la problème anglo-catholique au xvii^e siècle* [Paris, 1951]; Yves Chauvy, *Les Bénédictins anglais réfugiés en France au xvii^e siècle (1611-1669)* [Paris, 1967], pp. 95-128; and "New Evidence on the English Benedictines," *DR* 88 [1970]: 36-49). Even Jesuits could waver under pressure, both in England and in France (see Thomas H. Clancy, "The Jesuits and the Independents: 1647," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* [AHSI] 40 [1971]: 27-90; and P. Blet, "Jésuites gallicane au xvii^e siècle?" *AHSI* 29 [1960]: 54-84). Not only were there parallels between the controversies in England and in France, there was also

saw themselves as facing problems analogous to those of the Anglican church in its confrontation with the Puritans—the maintenance of discipline, order, and unity against arrogant and sometimes reckless zealots.⁶⁹

Those Anglican observers who drew parallels between the two established churches saw each quarrel between the French monarchy and the papacy as heralding the separation of France from Roman jurisdiction. Charles I frequently asserted that he was Catholic, but not Roman Catholic—any more than was the king of France.⁷⁰ These attitudes help to explain the relative equanimity with which the English monarchy viewed the establishment of a rudimentary hierarchy over the English Catholics. Many of the English seculars were publicly identified with the Gallican attitudes of their French counterparts; a bishop chosen from their midst would pose little threat to royal authority. So the court might well conclude from its experience with Ireland, where (until the mid-1620s) the Catholic hierarchy was drawn from Anglo-Irish loyalists acceptable to the English government.⁷¹

These perceived affinities between the Church of England and the Gallican church suggest possibilities for comparative research. A. D. Wright has drawn attention to similarities between the reform programs of Anglican bishops and those of Catholic episcopal reformers;⁷² the degree, if any, of mutual influence and intellectual exchange remains to be explored. It is unlikely, for example, that “divine right” episcopacy, English style, owed so little to contempo-

mutual involvement. English clergy, especially those living abroad, contributed to the development of the French Gallican debate. The French anti-Jesuits supported the English secular priests and encouraged the Sorbonne to condemn works by English Jesuits (Hughes, p. 357). For the connections between English seculars and French Jansenists in the early 1630s, see Ruth Clark, *Strangers and Sojourners at Port Royal* (1932; reprint ed., New York, 1972), pp. 10–13.

⁶⁹ Bossy, *Community* (n. 14 above), p. 45: “They felt they had found in Richard Bancroft an ecclesiastical ally as well as a political friend.”

⁷⁰ The Florentine agent Salvetti, commenting in early 1640 on English reaction to a Gallican edict of the Parliament of Paris, remarked that it was met with jubilation, the English hoping that it was a prelude to French schism (British Museum, Add. MS 27, 962H, fol. 397). The papal agent George Con made numerous references to his arguments with Charles I over the latter’s claims to be “Catholic” (see *ibid.*, Add. MSS 15,389–15,391). For James I’s assertions that he was Catholic and his sympathy with some Catholic doctrines, see Robert Peters, “Some Catholic Opinions of King James VI and I,” *RH* 10 (1970): 292–302. A reassessment of James I’s views on church and religion is long overdue.

⁷¹ Hugh Kearney, “Ecclesiastical Politics and the Counter-Reformation in Ireland, 1618–1648,” *JEH* 11 (1960): 202–12. The realignments of the 1620s proved significant during the Irish Rebellion.

⁷² A. D. Wright, “The People of Catholic Europe and the People of Anglican England,” *HJ* 18 (1975): 451–55.

rary continental debates as most English histories, by their silence, imply. A. G. Dickens complained a decade ago that study of the Reformation era by European scholars was too dominated by "central European perspectives"; yet current work on the post-Reformation Church of England is markedly insular in perspective.⁷³ The Church of England shared common ground not only with Protestant churches abroad but even with the English Catholic minority and with the established churches of Catholic countries. As historians move further from the "confessional" era into a more secularized one, the points of similarity between the confessions seem as definitive as those differences that were all-important to the participants.

* * *

Weighted always in the balance against the friendly, familiar face of English Catholicism was the dark, unknown, frightening side—the specter of international Catholicism, both monolithic and conspiratorial. The relations, actual and potential, between English Catholics, the church international, and the Catholic powers on the continent were a matter of obsessive concern to the government and the political nation. This concern finally found expression in the 1606 oath of allegiance devised in the wake of Gunpowder Plot to separate—it was said—loyal from disloyal Catholics. The oath remained the focus of tension between the crown and the papacy for over fifty years, during which numerous attempts were made to find a mutually satisfactory formula. The Catholic community was divided, sometimes bitterly, over the legitimacy of oath taking in the face of a specific papal prohibition by Paul V.⁷⁴ The fact that most of the clergy refused the oath, and most of the laity—when pressed,

⁷³ A. G. Dickens, "Recent Books on Reformation and Counter-Reformation History," *JEH* 19 (1968): 219–26. In two recent collections of scholarly essays on the Church of England, I found no reference either in text or footnote to European events or European scholarship (Felicity Heal and Rosemary O'Day, eds., *Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I* [London, 1977]; and, under the same editors, *Continuity and Change: Personnel and Administration of the Church in England, 1500–1642* [Leicester, 1976]).

⁷⁴ The main objection to the oath was the clause condemning as "heretical" the doctrine of the papal deposing power; although that doctrine was not considered binding, the wording of the oath put Catholics in the position of damning those who held it, including (potentially) the pope himself (see Clarence J. Ryan, "The Jacobean Oath of Allegiance and English Lay Catholics," *CHR* 28 [1942]: 159–83; and Thomas Clancy "English Catholics and the Papal Deposing Power, 1570–1640," *RH* 6 [1961–62]: 114–40, 205–227, and *RH* 7 [1963–64]: 2–10). The text of the oath is in J. P. Kenyon (*The Stuart Constitution* [Cambridge, 1966], pp. 458–60).

as they seldom were—would take it, is perhaps less surprising than either the oath's supporters or its opponents have since argued. Regardless of the oath's precise wording, the crucial point was whether to accept the papacy's condemnation of it or the government's assurance that in intent, it aimed not at religious belief but at civil obedience. On this point, status loyalty usually won out, the clergy accepting the pope's interpretation and the laity the king's.⁷⁵

It is easy to see why modern Catholic historians are tired of the issue of oaths and Catholic allegiance. The government's insistence on the oath in the face of decades of Catholic quietism and loyalty looks strange, and even malicious, in a purely domestic political context. Some would argue that this context is the only legitimate one—that what matters is the fact of loyalty and not the theory of papal deposition. But there were other facts of Catholic life that made it difficult to maintain the appearance of loyalty.

From the beginning of Elizabeth's reign it was the potential collaboration between Catholics in England and foreign governments—mediated by members of the exile communities—that posed the real political threat to the English establishment.⁷⁶ The government had always been anxious about the exiles, many of them of sufficient social standing to figure in the counsels of European courts.⁷⁷ By the early seventeenth century—and especially after Charles I married a French Catholic queen—France was competing with Spain for the clientage of the English Catholics. Nonetheless it remained true that the geographical center of the English Catholic exile lay in the Spanish Netherlands; and the concentration there was, if anything, increased in the period 1598–1640.⁷⁸ Efforts to expel the exiles from Flanders and scatter them far from England

⁷⁵ D. M. Lunn, "The English Benedictines and the Oath of Allegiance, 1606–1642," *RH* 10 (1969): 146–63. There were clergy who wrote defending the oath (see W. K. L. Webb, "Thomas Preston OSB, *alias* Roger Widdrington," *RH* 2 [1954]: 216–68; and Ruth E. Grun, "A Note on William Howard, Author of 'A patterne of Christian Loyaltie,'" *CHR* 40 [1956]: 330–41).

⁷⁶ Even the Gunpowder Plot had a significant connection with the exile community as A. H. Dodd long ago demonstrated in "The Spanish Treason, the Gunpowder Plot, and the Catholic Refugees" *English Historical Review* 53 [1938]: 627–50. See also D. M. Lunn, "Chaplains to the English Regiment in Spanish Flanders, 1605–1606," *RH* 11 (1971): 133–55.

⁷⁷ For lay Catholics abroad see A. J. Loomie (*The Spanish Elizabethans: Studies in the English Exiles at the Court of Philip II* [New York, 1963]), Ruth Clark (n. 68 above), and John W. Stoye (*English Travellers Abroad, 1604–1667* [London, 1952]).

⁷⁸ The chief male institutions by the 1630s were in Douai, St. Omer, Leige, Louvain, and Brussels. Outside of the Low Countries the centers were Rome, Paris, and Lisbon. A list compiled during the reign of Charles I estimated the number of English Catholics at seminaries, convents, monasteries, and colleges in the Spanish Low Countries at 1,100 (Guilday [n. 31 above], pp. 28–29).

were frustrated not only by lack of cooperation from the Spanish authorities but also by the persistence of the exiles in providing for their special needs. Proximity to England was vital to the religious communities for it facilitated both the traffic in students, priests, and nuns and the collection of money from home for their support.⁷⁹

By the reign of Charles I, the connection of English Catholics with the Spanish dominions had become almost entirely practical and nonideological. But English public opinion did not perceive this; nor was it quick to recognize the waning influence of Spain compared with France. The militant attitudes associated with the founders of the exile educational network were remembered, and the clustering of the exiles in Spanish Flanders contributed to this. The papal right of deposition had been defended by Cardinal Allen, founder of Douai and recognized leader of the Elizabethan exiles. It was still defended by Robert Persons in the 1590s as the Jesuit mission to England was getting underway. During this decade, several of the English colleges in Spanish territories supported a militant policy which anticipated Spanish invasion of England at the death of Elizabeth. Jesuit involvement with Spanish political designs had faded away after Persons's death in 1610. But the accusation made by the Appellants during the archpriest controversy, that the Jesuits and their supporters were traitors, stuck; and it was reinforced by the Jesuit hard line on the oath of allegiance.⁸⁰ The Society was branded as advocating assassination of Protestant princes, as a tool of Spanish intrigue, and as responsible—indirectly at least—for the Gunpowder Plot. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre and the assassinations of William the Silent and Henry IV were cited as examples of Jesuit theory in action.

Almost all the Catholic gentry of England had, by the end of Elizabeth's reign, rejected the activist interpretation of their political duties advanced by the "clerical" party in the first decades of the mission. But they could not reject the priests themselves. Unlike

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 19–22. In 1575, Cecil engineered the expulsion of the English Catholic foundations from Flanders, but it was short-lived. Persons's educational foundations on the Iberian peninsula languished after his death.

⁸⁰ The Jesuit superior, Richard Holtby, had taken the lead in opposing the oath when it appeared in 1606, and the English Jesuits, never really divided on the wrongness of the oath, acquired the reputation of refusing to absolve jurors. When, in the reign of Charles II, a new formula was developed for negotiation, the secular clergy chapter decided against showing it to the Jesuits, because—as Lingard later put it—"the Jesuits by their obstinate adherence to the ultramontane doctrine had brought on the English Catholics all the privations they suffered, and had uniformly opposed every attempt to obtain relief" (letter to Butler, March 15, 1819, cited by Miller [n. 64 above], pp. 28–33).

other religious groups in England, they depended on the ministry of foreign-trained priests. No other English religious group has been tied by an umbilical cord to the continent of Europe for over 200 years.⁸¹

The means of spiritual survival carried political implications for English Catholics that they might ignore but could not wish away. Constant communication among England, the European foundations, and Rome was the glue holding the mission—and with it, English Catholicism—together. England's status as a missionary territory under the supervision of Propaganda, the controversies within the mission, the missionaries' need for financial and moral support, the absence of local superiors with wide authorities—all these created a need for constant correspondence between England and Rome. Because this traffic with the continent was illegal, it was clandestine; being clandestine, its dimensions and meaning were unclear to anxious Protestants. Watching the tide of political Counter-Reformation across the Channel, seemingly ready to swamp the last Protestant outposts by 1635, English Protestants were, not surprisingly, fearful.

Thus, political anti-Catholicism was founded on fact as well as on fiction—the practical circumstances of Catholic survival as well as the hypothetical implications of the bull of excommunication. The apparent contradictions in Protestant attitudes to Catholics resolve themselves even further if we keep these circumstances in mind—the country Catholics left largely unmolested, the hysteria focused on the court Catholics, the cosmopolitans, the exiles. Popular belief in the international power of European Catholicism and its monolithic character isolated Catholics from other nonconformists and made them peculiarly vulnerable to political hysteria. Other nonconformists might derogate from the royal supremacy, but they were seldom offered oaths of allegiance to ferret out the subversive.⁸² Often regarded as dangerous, and sometimes compared with the Jesuits, Protestant sectaries nonetheless played a different part in the national political mythology. Officialdom might scathingly refer to the Puritans as "Protestant Jesuits"; but they and the sectaries of

⁸¹ The issues of Catholic organization and Catholic loyalty were revived in the early nineteenth century by the debates over Catholic emancipation, the resuscitation of the Jesuits after a forty-year suppression of their order, and the restoration of the English hierarchy. Much of the old polemic thus became enshrined in relatively recent historiography (see John Aveling, "Jesuit History," *Ampleforth Journal* 70 [1965]: 163–70).

⁸² In 1639, Charles I did impose an oath on the Scots in England and Ireland aimed against the Covenant as a "pretense of religion" for rebellion; this indicates how wide was the gulf separating his perceptions from those of most Englishmen.

the later seventeenth century were described as Jesuits in disguise, not vice versa.

Not surprisingly, English Catholics celebrated the end of an unhappy exile when the seminaries, convents, and schools abroad were forced back to England by the French Revolution and legalized by the English government. And English Catholic historians have been understandably reticent about the international political context of English Catholicism.⁸³ Yet here, I would argue, they miss an opportunity to exploit what is, from an historiographical point of view, an advantage. Catholics were perhaps unique in their collective dependence on communications with Europe. They were not at all unique in taking such communications for granted or in belonging to a world that was often wider (as it was often narrower) than that of "England."

The nation-state perspective in historical study is of limited utility for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But insofar as it has been abandoned by recent historians, it has almost always been replaced by a focus on local or provincial units rather than on pannational phenomena. A reconsideration of England in the context of international politics is overdue; and it should take serious account of the ecclesiastical, even (dare it be said?) apostolical ambitions of European leaders before Westphalia.⁸⁴ Political relations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries cannot be explained without reference to ecclesiastical aims and even ecclesiastical persons; throughout Europe, for example, the clergy were used as diplomats, and this was true for England as well.⁸⁵

⁸³ The history of the foreign foundations has not been neglected—indeed their records have been extensively published by the Catholic Record Society—but they have been treated institutionally and in isolation from domestic and international politics. The one outstanding treatment of early modern English Catholicism in its domestic and international political context is the work of a German Lutheran (see A. O. Meyer, *England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth*, trans. J. R. McKee, ed. with introduction by John Bossy [London, 1967]).

⁸⁴ But see the works of Maurice Lee (*James I and Henry IV* [Urbana, Ill., 1970]), Charles H. Carter (*Secret Diplomacy of the Habsburgs, 1598–1625* [New York, 1964]), and Marvin Breslow (*A Mirror of England: English Puritan Views of Foreign Nations, 1618–1640* [Cambridge, Mass., 1970]). Contemporary interest in foreign affairs, albeit ill-informed, was intense, as J. S. Morrill has reemphasized in *Revolt of the Provinces* (pp. 20–23). He appears to find this both surprising and disappointing—indicative of the gentry's failure to recognize the "very real constitutional issues raised by the crises of 1621 and 1626–29." Recent studies of early Stuart parliaments have paid somewhat more attention to foreign policy debates.

⁸⁵ This feature of English diplomacy has been overlooked, in part because the clergy thus employed were often Catholic. Catholic laymen and clergy slip among the pages of the foreign state papers, and are mostly unidentified by the historians who make use of these documents. See F. X. Martin (*Friar Nugent . . . 1569–1635* [London, 1962]) for the Capucins Alessandro d'Alès, Giacinto da Casale, and Nugent

In replacing England in a wider political context, one useful starting point might be the Catholic diaspora that Loomie has studied for the Elizabethan period.⁸⁶ The activities of Irish exiles, as has recently been demonstrated, provide an important part of the background to the Irish rebellion; a study of the wanderings, political contacts, and religiopolitical projects of English Catholics abroad might similarly illuminate features of the English political crisis of 1640–42 that remain obscure.⁸⁷ An international approach to the history of scholarship will also find a useful focus in Catholic institutions. The overseas foundations offer concrete examples of the interrelations between English scholarship and the wider European scholarly world. We know that English theology, classical scholarship, science and historical and antiquarian research were not insulated by confessional or national boundaries in 1700; nor were they in 1600 or 1650.⁸⁸ Not only Catholic books but other continental imprints were imported into England in quantity, as the probate inventories of many gentlemen's libraries reveal.

who were all involved in negotiations with James I in the 1620s. For the Dominican William Barrett's activities in Spain, see A. J. Loomie ("Olivares, the English Catholics and the Peace of 1630," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 47 [1969]: 1154–66). See also A. O. Meyer, "Charles I and Rome," *American Historical Review* 19 (1913): 13–26; Gordon Albion, *Charles I and the Court of Rome* (London, 1935); Margaret MacCurtain, "Dominic O'Daly: An Irish Diplomat," *Studia Hibernica* 5 (1965): 98–112; Godfrey Anstruther, "Cardinal Howard and the English Court, 1658–1694," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 28 (1958): 315–61; and A. J. Loomie, *Toleration and Diplomacy: The Religious Issue in Anglo-Spanish Relations, 1603–1605*, in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s., vol. 53, pt. 6 (Philadelphia, 1963).

⁸⁶ See A. J. Loomie, *Spain and the Jacobean Catholics. Vol. I: 1603–1612*, CRS, vol. 64 (London, 1973); "Richard Berry: Gondomar's English Catholic Adviser," *RH* 11 (1971): 45–57; and "The Armadas and the Catholics of England," *CHR* 59 (1973): 385–403.

⁸⁷ See Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland, 1625–1642* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966); Jerrold I. Casway, "Owen Roe O'Neill's Return to Ireland in 1642: The Diplomatic Background," *Studia Hibernica* 9 (1969): 48–64; Keith J. Lindley, "The Impact of the 1641 Rebellion upon England and Wales, 1641–1645," *Irish Historical Studies* 18 (1972): 143–76. The recently alleged "neutrality" of the Catholics in the Civil War (Keith J. Lindley, "The Part Played by the Catholics," in *Politics, Religion, and the English Civil War*, ed. Brian Manning [London, 1973], pp. 127–76) has been challenged by P. R. Newman ("Catholic Royalist Activists in the North, 1642–1646," *RH* 14 [1977]: 26–38) as being based on faulty documentation, neglect of the problem of Catholic war fatalities, and an unimaginatively statistical approach to an unquantifiable political problem. The "Catholic issue" (as Kenyon [n. 74 above], chap. 13 emphasizes) was neither dead nor dying in 1600 or 1640; had it been, it would be difficult indeed to explain its resurgence after 1660.

⁸⁸ Alan Davidson, "Catholics and Bodley," *Bodleian Library Record* 8 (1971): 252–57; Tavard, "Scripture and Tradition" (n. 35 above); Aveling, "Some Aspects" (n. 5 above), pp. 103–5, and "Education of Eighteenth-Century English Monks" (n. 30 above).

The Catholic diaspora produced not only the polemical literature for which it is best known but also ecumenical figures, cast into undeserved obscurity by the short-term futility of their labors. A few regained notoriety through their influence on the Oxford Movement; others remain shadowy, fringe figures, condemned as misguided and heterodox by both sides.⁸⁹ What nourished the hopes of the advocates of reconciliation, how did they formulate their arguments, what was their fate? These questions, recently and fruitfully asked of the 1539–41 colloquies,⁹⁰ might be posed of many other efforts at compromise.

The integration of English Catholic history with that of European Catholicism on the one hand and that of England on the other has been slowed by the inward looking, private character of the English recusant historical tradition—what Aveling has described as “a particularly locked *hortus conclusus*.”⁹¹ Bossy and Aveling, in different ways, have opened avenues. In exploring further, a sectarian model will be productive in some respects, a churchly and/or internationally focused model in others. Both English and international, neither still a church nor yet fully a sect, early modern English Catholicism has a complex character. This is nothing but an asset for its historians, who are particularly well placed to widen the sometimes parochial perspectives of English historiography.

⁸⁹ On the Franciscan Christopher Davenport, see Dockery's biography (n. 28 above); George H. Tavard, “Christopher Davenport and the Problem of Tradition,” *Theological Studies* 24 (1963): 278–90; and Robert I. Bradley, “Christopher Davenport and the Thirty-Nine Articles,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 52 (1961): 205–28. Tavard (“Scripture and Tradition” [n. 35 above], pp. 343–44) has pointed out the absurdity of searching only Anglican, not Catholic, writers for antecedents to Newman's doctrine on tradition; Bradley notes that Tract XC was taken largely from Davenport's *Deus, Natura, Gratia* of 1634 (Bradley, “Christopher Davenport and the Thirty-Nine Articles,” p. 226). On the Benedictine Leander Jones, see Gerard Sitwell, “Leander Jones' Mission to England, 1634–1635,” *RH* 5 (1960): 132–82. These wanderers had Protestant counterparts, such as John Dury, who provided a link between English leaders of the opposition to Charles I and continental Protestant ecumenicists (see G. G. Turnbull, *Hartlib, Dury and Comenius* [Liverpool, 1947]; and H. R. Trevor-Roper, “Three Foreigners: The Philosophers of the Puritan Revolution,” in *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* [London, 1972]). The continuing instability of religious affiliation in seventeenth-century Europe is often underestimated. The *responsa scholarum* of entrants to the English College in Rome (CRS, vols. 54 and 55) give an extraordinary picture of religious diversity within families, of sudden conversions, of fallings-away and reconversions. See Aveling's biographical sketches in *Handle and Axe* (n. 14 above) for much evidence of shifting allegiances of individuals and families. Thomas Clancy describes numerous instances of conversion and reconversion (as well as the distaste English Catholics felt for the term “papist”) in “Papist-Protestant-Puritan: English Religious Taxonomy, 1565–1665,” *RH* 13 (1976): 227–53.

⁹⁰ Basil Hall, “The Colloquies between Catholics and Protestants, 1539–41,” *SCH* 7 (1971): 235–66.

⁹¹ Aveling, “Some Aspects” (n. 5 above), p. 100.